Observer Status in SAARC

4632. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the existence of observer status held by US, China and Japan in SAARC has added any discomfiture to India;

(b) the stand of India in allowing Observers in SAARC; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) India has welcomed the presence of Observers in SAARC. Government are of view that SAARC will benefit from these external linkages.

Concept of Visa on Arrival at Airport

4633. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government planned to introduce the concept of visa on arrival at airports in our country;

(b) if so, the security norms to be followed by the authority to verify the authentications of travel purpose and details provided by just entering passengers; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

Pow Languishing in Pakistani Jails

†4634. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of Pakistan has allowed the relatives of Indian Prisoners of War and Non-Government Organizations

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

to visit Islamabad in search of these prisoners languishing in Pakistani Jails;

(b) if so, whether Government has constituted a high-level committee to deal with the issue;

(c) if so, whether the said committee has made any procedure for relatives of said Prisoners of War; and

(d) the number of relatives of such Prisoners of war sent to Pakistan so far for their identification?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes. In January 2007, during the visit of the External Affairs Minister to Pakistan, the matter was taken up with the Government of Pakistan and it has agreed to accept a visit of families of PoWs to Pakistan.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The proposed visit is yet to take place.

Japanese Offer in Nuclear Technology

4635. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNALAFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Japan while urging India to Joint NPT and refusing to acknowledge India's nuclear possession has offered supply of nuclear power equipment and technology;

(b) if so, details of Japanese reaction to Indo-US Nuclear Agreement and the offer made by Japan; and

(c) Government's response and reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Japan is a party to the NPT aned continues to support the binary NPT view distinguishing between nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States. India's views on the NPT are known to Japan. No offer for supply of nuclear power equipment and technology from Japan is under discussion.